

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 5, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel G. Hubbard to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Cambridge, Sunday, March 5th. (1876?) My dear Alec:

I only begin gradually to comprehend what a triumph your success is. So see how important it is for the Western Union to crush attempts that if successful will undermine its colossal power. Mr. Orton is not I fancy the man to let you get so if he can help it, and I understand less and less how, simply by your right you have beaten him — him almost the most powerful man in this country, and willing to spare no expense, honest or dishonest to conquer you. Just now too when Belknap's iniquity coming after all those other stories and scandals, makes us feel as if there were no justice in such a sink of corruption as Washington.

I suppose you a foreigner cannot understand how deeply every American feels this shame and disgrace. It comes home to me, and I feel as if it were effrontery in me to carry on correspondence with our English friends, as if Mrs. Ackers would now be sorry she had written that kind letter to those who bear the brand of such a crime.

If Briston and Jewell give away I do not know what we shall do. If they only knew how we cling to their good name as the last refuge against corruption. Oh — General Grant must not, shall not be a participator in Belknap's guilt as some hint. We cannot spare him, our Centennial President, the heroic Commander-in-chief. Ain't it dreadful this should happen in Centennial year, when all the world is watching us with unusual interest. How they must dispise — disgust us. I wish the Centennial could be put off, anything rather than have unfriendly contemptuous eyes peering into us ?re we have done something 2 to wipe away our shame. You shall not say one harsh word. I cannot bear it, and after all England has

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borne this same shame and with not half such deep sorrow. She has no right to throw the first stone at us even if she is purer now.

Forgive this long declamation, this forms the principal subject of conversation and I cannot write to you without speaking of it.

I am glad you still stay in Washington if it is absolutely necessary, but are you not forgetting your work here, the four lectures you can so ill afford to lose. We want you back very much indeed too. I am extremely anxious about your letters, I am sure some must have come for you somewhere, you always seemed to have such an enormous correspondence, and if so there may be some important immediate ones that suffer by this delay.

I shall be so glad to have you back again, it seems a great while since you left. But if Papa is coming this week and you can as well afford to wait, do so, I am anxious you should see and know each other. I hope you enjoyed the *Conversazione* (if that is what they call it.) I want to know all about it and how you enjoyed and acquitted yourself.

With a great deal of love for yourself and also for every one of my dear friends and relations in New York.

Lovingly, Mabel.